

# **BASIC OVERVIEW OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROCESS**

## **Origin & Purpose**

Florida's 1985 Growth Management Act requires all of Florida's 67 counties and 410 municipalities to adopt Local Government Comprehensive Plans that guide the community's future growth and development. Comprehensive plans contain chapters or elements that address future land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, coastal management, conservation, recreation and open space, intergovernmental coordination, capital improvements as well as other optional elements such as public safety, economic development and public education to name a few.

Each local government comprehensive plan must be re-evaluated every seven years and adopt an Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR). The report evaluates how successful a local government has been in addressing major community planning issues through implementation of its comprehensive plan. Based on this evaluation, the report suggests how the Comprehensive Plan should be revised to better address community objectives, changing conditions and trends affecting the community, and changes in state requirements.

## **The State Agencies' Role in Comprehensive Planning**

The Growth Management Act requires the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), to review each local government's comprehensive plan for compliance with the Growth Management Act. Other review agencies, including the regional planning councils, water management districts, the Departments of State, Transportation, Environmental Protection, and Agriculture, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission also review comprehensive plans and issue recommendations to DCA.

After reviewing the local government's comprehensive plan DCA then issues an Objections, Recommendations and Comments (ORC) report that identifies areas of the proposed plan that are inconsistent with the State's requirements. The local government may or may not address the recommendations to revise the proposed plan or amendment, or elect to adopt or not adopt the amendment. When the local government adopts the plan, it is submitted to DCA for a compliance review. Within 20 to 45 days of receipt of the adopted amendment, DCA issues a public Notice of Intent (NOI) to find the adopted plan either in or not in compliance with the Act. If DCA finds the plan not in compliance, the local government must take remedial actions to bring the plan into compliance to avoid an administrative hearing.

## **Citizen's Role in Comprehensive Planning**

The Growth Management Act made citizen participation a vital component of the Comprehensive Planning process. As such, residents are encouraged to review their City's Comprehensive Plans and participate in any future amendments of the comprehensive plan to ensure that proposed changes are in compliance with the Growth Management Act. Public hearings are generally advertised to give affected property owners an opportunity to participate in the planning process and provide comments on any proposed amendments that may potentially impact their property.

For additional information regarding the Comprehensive Plan process log on to <http://www.dca.state.fl.us/fdcp/dcp/compplanning/index.cfm>